

OAKLAND

# Group for port ballpark moves ahead on plans

Businessmen seek permits despite A's owner's position

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OAKLAND — A team of leading Oakland businessmen is seeking control of a soon-to-be vacated shipping terminal, where they want the A's to build a waterfront baseball stadium.

While A's co-owner Lew Wolff once again Wednesday rejected a ballpark at Howard Terminal, just north of Jack London Square, the Oakland Waterfront Ballpark, LLC, is moving ahead to obtain permits and regulatory approval for a stadium on the 50-acre site in hopes that Wolff or a future team owner will build it.

The A's, who play in one of the oldest major league ballparks, are being forced to reconsider their stadium options in Oakland after being repeatedly stymied in their bid to move to San Jose. For the first time in nearly a decade, Wolff last month expressed some openness to building at the Coliseum complex in East Oakland. But he has repeatedly said the waterfront plan is not feasible.

Wolff met with Oakland officials Wednesday to learn more about a city proposal to transform the Coliseum complex into a sports and entertainment hub. He said via email before the meeting that he would not comment on the discussions.

The waterfront site is favored by business leaders who see it as a magnet for development around Jack London Square and the city center.

The five-member consortium, which includes

Clorox CEO Don Knauss and former Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream CEO T. Gary Rogers, already commissioned artist renderings for a waterfront stadium. Last week, they formally asked the Port of Oakland to enter into exclusive negotiations with the goal of developing a ballpark and other amenities at the terminal.

The agreement would include an option period of two to three years during which the businessmen would work to obtain the necessary permits and perform an estimated \$1 million environmental review of the site.

Members of the consortium declined to comment Wednesday.

Wolff, who would have to pay to build the stadium, has countered that the waterfront site is too far from BART and would entail an expensive environmental cleanup — a claim rejected by stadium proponents.

A stadium at the port also would require state regulators to find that there is no viable maritime use for the property. The port is studying three maritime proposals for the terminal, although one of them would be temporary and another would take up only a few acres.

Port spokesman Marilyn Sandifur said port executives are evaluating the proposals but had no comment on them.

Mayor Jean Quan, who appointed all five members of the Port Commission, praised the consortium's push for a waterfront stadium and said it was up to Wolff to decide between that site and the Coliseum.

"My main goal is to keep the A's in Oakland," she said. "As long as they stay, I'm happy."